

1.1 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The County of Placer (Placer County; County) is processing the Palisades at Squaw Project (proposed project; project), which involves approval of a major subdivision and design review. These entitlements would divide the project site into 63 lots for residential development, lots for open space, parkland, and a recreational trail system, and associated roadways and infrastructure. See Section 2.0, Project Description, for a complete description of the proposed project.

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 (as amended) to evaluate the environmental impacts associated with the proposed project. CEQA requires the preparation of an EIR prior to approving any project that may have a significant effect on the environment. For the purposes of CEQA, the term *project* refers to the whole of an action which has the potential for resulting in a direct physical change or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378[a]). With respect to the proposed project, Placer County has determined that the proposed development is a project within the definition of CEQA.

The County, acting as the lead agency, has prepared this EIR to provide the public and responsible and trustee agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. As described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15121(a), an EIR is a public informational document that assesses potential environmental effects of the proposed project, as well as identifies mitigation measures and alternatives to the proposed project that could reduce or avoid its adverse environmental impacts. Public agencies are charged with the duty to consider and minimize environmental impacts of proposed development where feasible and are obligated to balance a variety of public objectives, including economic, environmental, and social factors.

This section summarizes the purpose of the EIR, describes the environmental procedures that are to be followed according to state law, discusses the intended uses of the EIR, and describes the EIR's scope and organization, contact person, and impact terminology.

1.2 TYPE OF DOCUMENT

The CEQA Guidelines identify several types of EIRs, each applicable to different project circumstances. This EIR has been prepared as a project EIR pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15161. Project EIRs are defined by State CEQA Guidelines Section 15161 as:

The most common type of EIR examines the environmental impacts of a specific development project. This type of EIR should focus primarily on the changes in the environment that would result from the development of the project. The EIR shall examine all phases of the project including planning, construction, and operation.

By preparing a project EIR, the County intends to allow the entire project, if approved, to proceed without additional CEQA analysis, absent the kinds of changed circumstances or project modifications that trigger the preparation of a subsequent EIR, supplemental EIR, or addendum (see CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162–15164).

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1.3 INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

This EIR is intended to evaluate the environmental impacts of the project to the greatest extent possible. This EIR, prepared in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126, will be used as the primary environmental document to evaluate all planning and permitting requests associated with the project. The proposed project requests to be considered by the County are the following:

- Certification of Environmental Impact Report and adoption of Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
- Approval of Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map
- Granting of Design Exception Request
- Approval of Conditional Use Permit for a Planned Residential Development

Other subsequent actions to be considered by the County include, but are not limited to the following:

- Design Review
- Improvement Plan Review
- Building and Grading Permits

KNOWN RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES

For the purpose of CEQA, the term *responsible agency* includes all public agencies other than the lead agency that have discretionary approval power over a project or an aspect of a project. The following agencies are identified as potential responsible agencies for this project:

State Agencies

- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) – Timber Harvest Plan and Timberland Conversion Permit

Local Agencies

- Squaw Valley Public Service District – Development Agreement for service provision

KNOWN TRUSTEE AGENCIES

For the purpose of CEQA, the term *trustee agency* means a state agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project which are held in trust for the people of California. The following agencies are identified as trustee agencies

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire)

1.4 EIR SCOPE AND ORGANIZATION

Sections 15122 through 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines identify the content requirements for Draft and Final EIRs. An EIR must include a description of the environmental setting, an environmental impact analysis, mitigation measures, project alternatives, significant unavoidable environmental impacts, growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts. The County determined the scope for this EIR based on the Notice of Preparation, comments in response to the NOP, agency consultation, and review of the project application.

Section 4.0 of this EIR contains a brief discussion of those possible significant effects of the proposed project that have been determined to be less than significant and are not discussed in detail in the EIR. These include agriculture and forest resources, land use and planning, and mineral resources.

This Draft EIR is organized in the following manner:

SECTION ES – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This section summarizes the characteristics of the proposed project and provides a concise summary matrix of the project's environmental impacts and associated mitigation measures.

SECTION 1.0 – INTRODUCTION

Section 1.0 provides an introduction and overview describing the intended use of the EIR and the review and certification process.

SECTION 2.0 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Section 2.0 provides a detailed description of the proposed project, including intended objectives, background information, and physical and technical characteristics.

SECTION 3.0 – LAND USE AND PLANNING

Section 3.0 addresses the land use and planning implications of the project and discusses potential inconsistencies with land use plans.

SECTION 4.0 – ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING, IMPACTS, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Section 4.0 contains an analysis of environmental topic areas as identified below. Each subsection contains a description of the existing setting of the project site, identifies standards of significance, identifies project-related impacts, and recommends mitigation measures.

The following major environmental topics are addressed in this section:

- Aesthetics, Light, and Glare
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Utilities
- Transportation and Traffic

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SECTION 5.0 – OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

This section contains discussions and analysis of various topical issues mandated by CEQA. These include significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the project is implemented and growth-inducing impacts. This section also summarizes the cumulative impacts associated with the project. CEQA Section 15130 requires that an EIR discuss the cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable.

SECTION 6.0 –PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 requires that an EIR describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project which could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project and avoid and/or lessen its environmental effects. This alternatives analysis provides a comparative analysis between the project and the selected alternatives, which include:

- **No Project Alternative (No Development):** CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e) requires that a “no project” alternative be evaluated in an EIR. Under this alternative, the project would not be approved or implemented and no changes would occur to the project site at this time.
- **No Project Alternative (Maximum Density Development):** The No Project Alternative (Maximum Density Development) evaluates the scenario in which the project site is developed at the maximum density allowed under its current zoning (HDR DR-20) which would result in the development of up to 240 units on the site.
- **Reduced Density Alternative:** The Reduced Density Development Alternative evaluates the scenario in which the project site is developed at a lower density compared to the proposed project.

SECTION 7.0 – REPORT PREPARATION

This section lists all authors and agencies that assisted in the preparation of the report by name, title, and company or agency affiliation.

APPENDICES

This section includes all notices and other procedural documents pertinent to the EIR, as well as all technical material prepared to support the analysis.

1.5 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The review and certification process for the EIR will involve the following procedural steps:

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

In accordance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, the County prepared an Initial Study (IS) and Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an EIR for the project on September 2, 2015. This IS/NOP was circulated to the public, local, state, and federal agencies, and other interested parties to solicit comments on the project. The IS/NOP is presented in **Appendix 1.0**. The County held a scoping meeting on September 23, 2015.

DRAFT EIR PUBLIC NOTICE/PUBLIC REVIEW

This document constitutes the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR contains a description of the project, description of the environmental setting, identification of project impacts, and mitigation measures for impacts found to be significant, as well as an analysis of project alternatives. Upon completion of the Draft EIR, the County will file the Notice of Completion (NOC) with the State Office of Planning and Research to begin the public review period (Public Resources Code Section 21161). Concurrent with the NOC, the County will provide public notice of the availability of the Draft EIR for public review and invite comment from the general public, agencies, organizations, and other interested parties.

The review period for this Draft EIR is 45 days. Public comment on the Draft EIR will be accepted both in written form and orally at public hearings. Although no public hearings to accept comments on the EIR are required by CEQA, the County expects to hold a public comment meeting during the 45-day review period prior to EIR certification. Notice of the time and location of the hearing will be published prior to the hearing. All comments or questions regarding the Draft EIR should be addressed to:

Shirlee Harrington
Placer County
3091 County Center Drive
Auburn, CA 95603

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS/FINAL EIR

Following the public review period, a Final EIR will be prepared. The Final EIR will respond to written comments received during the public review period and to oral comments made at public hearings regarding the project.

CERTIFICATION OF THE EIR/PROJECT CONSIDERATION

The Placer County Planning Commission will review and consider the Final EIR. If the Planning Commission finds that the Final EIR is "adequate and complete," the Planning Commission will certify the EIR and approve the project. The Planning Commission will hold a hearing on the project as part of consideration of its requested entitlements. A decision to approve the project would be accompanied by written findings in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 and, if applicable, a Statement of Overriding Considerations in accordance with Section 15093. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP), as described below, would also be adopted for mitigation measures that have been incorporated into or imposed upon the project to reduce or avoid significant effects on the environment. This MMRP will be designed to ensure that these measures are carried out during project implementation.

MITIGATION MONITORING

CEQA Section 21081.6(a) requires lead agencies to adopt an MMRP to describe measures that have been adopted or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment. The specific "reporting or monitoring" program required by CEQA is not required to be included in the EIR; however, it will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for adoption. Throughout the EIR, mitigation measures are clearly identified and presented in language that will facilitate establishment of an MMRP. Any mitigation measures

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adopted by the County as conditions for approval of the project will be included in the MMRP to verify compliance.

1.6 COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE NOTICE OF PREPARATION

The County received comment letters on the NOP for the proposed project (see **Table 1.0-1**). A copy of each letter is provided in **Appendix 1.0** of this EIR. The County received letters from the agencies and interested parties listed in **Table 1.0-1**.

**TABLE 1.0-1
LIST OF NOP COMMENT LETTERS**

Agency	Date	Comment	Location Addressed in EIR
Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit	September 2, 2015	This is the Clearinghouse's standard letter notifying agencies of the release of the NOP and the opportunity to provide comments in response to the NOP.	N/A
Department of the Army, US Army Corps of Engineers	September 15, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends preparation of a wetland delineation for the project site to identify waters of the United States. • Recommends that the EIR include alternatives to the project that avoid impacts to waters of the United States or, if not feasible, provide adequate mitigation to compensate for impacts. 	Section 4.3, Biological Resources
Creekside Estates Home Owners Association	September 16, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends preparation of a traffic study and evaluation of potential impacts in the DEIR related to traffic congestion, physical deterioration of existing roadways, interference with access, and conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians/bicycles. • Recommends that the proposed project be accessed from Squaw Creek Road rather than Creek End Court. 	Section 4.12, Transportation and Traffic, and Appendix 4.12
Squaw Valley Public Service District (SVPD)	September 30, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District requires improvements to existing and construction of new infrastructure to be completed prior to project construction. • Recommends consideration of an emergency egress to State Route (SR) 89 • Project may require additional fire protection facilities, equipment, and staffing to maintain service levels. Gap funding may be required until anticipated tax revenue from the project is realized. • Water demand for the Palisades project is assumed in the Village at Squaw Valley Water Supply Assessment (WSA). • Project applicant will be required to update the district's 2007 Capacity and Reliability Study to confirm water resources available to the project. • New water treatment facilities may be required to serve the proposed project • Existing district test wells are present on the project site and will require proper abandonment per County standards. • Project will require installation of a new, off-site underground 	Section 4.11, Public Services and Utilities

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Agency	Date	Comment	Location Addressed in EIR
		<p>pressure-reducing vault.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes necessary sewer improvements to serve the proposed project. Requests that the EIR evaluate the capacities of the Tahoe-Truckee Sanitation Agency's (T-TSA) sewer facilities that would serve the project. Recommends that the EIR evaluate the need for new or expanded corporation yards. Encourages relocation of the district's community dumpster facility to the project site. 	
Tahoe-Truckee Sanitation Agency	September 28, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes the T-TSA's existing sewer conveyance and treatment facilities in the project area. Recommends that the EIR provide the project's specific fixture count in order to determine if existing conveyance and treatment capacity is available. Recommends that the EIR also evaluate potential impacts to SVPSP sewer facilities. 	Section 4.11, Public Services and Utilities
Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board	October 8, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommends that the EIR address potentially significant effects to biological resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, wastewater treatment, and cumulative impacts. Recommends that the EIR evaluate potential impacts related to two private dams located upstream of the project site. Describes various permits which may be required for the proposed project. Recommends that the EIR evaluate all project-specific, cumulative, direct, and indirect impacts of the proposed project on water quality and provide mitigation measures and alternatives that avoid such impacts. 	Section 4.8, Hydrology and Water Quality
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)	October 1, 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggests including a multimodal analysis of bicycle and pedestrian trip generation and distribution. Ensure no net increase in runoff to Caltrans facilities. Work in state right-of-way requires an encroachment permit. 	

1.7 IMPACT TERMINOLOGY

This EIR uses the following terminology to describe environmental effects of the proposed project:

- **Standards of Significance:** A set of criteria used by the lead agency to determine at what level or "threshold" an impact would be considered significant. Significance criteria used in this EIR include the CEQA Guidelines, factual or scientific information, regulatory performance standards of local (including County), state, and federal agencies, and County goals, objectives, and policies.
- **Less Than Significant Impact:** A less than significant impact would cause no substantial change in the environment. No mitigation is required.
- **Significant Impact:** A significant impact would cause, or would potentially cause, a substantial adverse change in the physical conditions of the environment. Significant impacts are identified by the evaluation of project effects using specified standards of significance. Mitigation measures and/or project alternatives are identified to reduce project effects to the environment.
- **Significant and Unavoidable Impact:** A significant and unavoidable impact would result in a substantial change in the environment that cannot be avoided or mitigated to a less than significant level if the project is implemented.
- **Cumulatively Considerable:** Cumulatively considerable means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.
- **Less Than Cumulatively Considerable:** A less than cumulatively considerable impact results when the incremental effects of an individual project would not contribute significantly to a cumulative impact.
- **County:** County of Placer
- **Applicant:** Any person or other legal entity who applies to the County to develop or improve any portion of the real property within the project site. The term *applicant* includes all successors in interest.
- **Project Site/Property:** The project site consists of two parcels that are separated by a paved roadway, Creeks End Court, which provides access to existing residences north of the site. The project site total acreage is 19.92 acres.
- **Project Area/Vicinity:** The project area or project vicinity, as used herein, is the nearby or adjacent area surrounding the project site in which significant effects would occur either directly or indirectly as a result of the project.
- **Proposed Project:** The Palisades at Squaw Project consists of 63 lots for residential development, and dedicated land areas for open space, parkland, and a recreational trail system. Development of the project site would include on-site roadway improvements, widening of Creeks End Court along the project site frontage, utility improvements, and drainage and water quality improvement features.

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